551 course within the individual who hears it, its effect on him, and the return effect on the individual reciting it are all developed according to a known mechanism.

The barama, a word which may be translated as "encouragement," "compliment," or "flattery," is a narrative, usually in poetic form, relating the origin of the name and the exploits of the ancestors (1).

[576] 1. The device, in its entirety, is generally known only to the griot, but certain parts of it, certain traditional phrases known to all, are used as a greeting to its owner.

551 539 Thus one of the elements of the Diara device bears witness to the role of their ancestors:

"Diara, Zan of Nyaola, Yayiri of Nyaola, your grandfather curved the world like a sickle, straightened it out like a straight road; grandson of God on earth, Diara!" (2)

2. Dyara, nyaola za, nyaola yayiri, i moke ye ka dye kuru i ko woloso ka foni i ko sira tike nindye; duguma ngala modẽ, dyara. Nyaola is a village. The name of Zan is always given to the eldest son in a family. The word dyara also means lion.

Another element exalts their courage in battle:

"Diara, Koné: if there is not a Koné among the warriors who will fight, the troop will be beaten (in advance). The lion has broken a great bone" (3).

3. Dyara, kone, kone čé kele te kele min oye fele ye; dyara ye kolo ba kari. Koné is another of the Diara's dyamu; fele describes a group of men gathered together for the hunt or for war.

The Tangara device also recalls their history and their victories:

"Descendants of Falé, Kwonda, Méné: other brave men purchased their right to sit in the village; we, brave men, won it with our bow and arrows" (4).

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4. Fale kwonda mene siw, tow bomaw ye dugu sa ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani kala. Falé, Kwonda, and Méné are the names of ancestors. The device is that of the Tangara of the village of Barbé.

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Moreover, the device also carries a statement of the bearer's genealogy, burudyu (1). To say this genealogy is equivalent to

1. The word si, meaning race, is used to indicate the burudyu, which is comparable to the dambe of the Peul of Mopti.

"attacking the /77/ ancestors." To speak of them, to quote them, and to tell their exploits honors them and pacifies them. In the course of the recitation "the air emitted by the speaker" is transformed by the power of the spirit, Teliko, into coolness which penetrates the ancestors (2). The same is true for supernatural powers. As soon as

2. Teliko ba sumaya se u ma. "Téliko makes coolness come to them."

the Komo chief recites Faro's burudyu, "the air coming out of the chief's mouth is transformed into good nyama which penetrates Faro's body through his pupils and ears."

To tell a man his burudyu is to honor him greatly. He thinks of his ancestors, their fortune, and their glory; he is proud to be descended from them and is incited to do as well or better than they. The effect of the "good word" described above is due to the indirect but powerful action of the ancestors (3). The recitation by a third

3. However the soul (ni) of the cited ancestors is neither called upon nor displaced by the recitation. It is the vital force, nyama, which is put into motion here.

party has the effect of maintaining the individual in his being, of making him persevere by affirming it (4), for the device appeals to

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people

[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 In case of illness, the ally (senānku) (2) comes to the patient's
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2. See p. 119.

side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

55 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when address-
57 ing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to
539 whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

794 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (korti), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

794 534 The Komo's iron bell, kolokolo or grinda, is kept with certain altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, grindavo or nadara koloyo.

713 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child

1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders

[796] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the nyari nyari to.

went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

794 they keep the instrument for religious ceremonies. After declaring
534 that they would obey, the elders returned to the crossroads where
773 the Soba spirit gave them the bell and left in exchange the child whom
539 the spirit had called to him in their absence.

The object was then taken to the blacksmith who made one in the same shape, using wood or bone for the body, and stone for the clapper. After the invention of iron, they were forged according to the ancient model with the addition of small copper bells."

794 /153/ To ring the bell is "to make Faro hear the sound of copper,"
534 to call him, and flatter him at the same time. When the mask is brought out, the sound warns the noninitiates to avoid the procession. The flute or reed pipe of the Komo, wara da, "mouth of the one armed with claws," is made of a bamboo stem pierced by three holes. The middle one is open and the two others are obstructed by a cobweb. The instrument is held between the bearer's teeth and is tied by a string to the back of his neck or to his ears.

794 A myth tells the origin of Faro's flute, made according to the
534 same principle, but of a different shape.
773 A woman, called Koussouba Koulibali, was bathing one morning
539 when she saw Faro and the dodo fish sitting at the river bank. The fish was playing the flute and singing:

"I will whistle, I will whistle in my Faro's flute; he who will not hear me will die, he who will die will regret it" (1).

1. Na fye, na fye ne nka faro fle flye,
nyimi mame o na sa, nyimi sara o bone na.

The woman fled and told her husband, who was a diviner and chief of the Komo, about what had happened. The latter proceeded to the banks of the Niger and frightened away the fish who abandoned its instrument. The man seized it and went home, followed by the turbulent river water from which he managed to escape in his canoe. But his whole family perished in the flood.

In the morning, the man returned to the river bank and cried as he played the flute. He played for such a long time that Faro, taking pity on him, came out and said: "I have drowned the members of your family and flooded the village. I forgive you, however,

794 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and
534 since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes
773 be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo
539 flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength, nyama. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this instrument.

794 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is
534 performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device; he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing with a soft throat" (1).

1. Fɛ̃ kã̀ duma.

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with
852 the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo boli and recites the komo kumã̀: "You, Komo boli, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, you are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo boli, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;
komo dyɛ̃ la, nin fɛ̃w ba la; komo sira
la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisɛ̃ ye
i bi ta makorobaya ye; komo boli nde fle,
tyɛ do, i dyã̀ to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.

[782] After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [807] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke 713 these laws are told.

539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone. But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the flãvlãña, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swear-

1. Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flãvlãña kẹ, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kẹ.

ing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (matolilo) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called wolo ti, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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hemp), palm fibers, and leaves. On their heads they wear a cap or calotte, also made of hemp and surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden crest or a bird's beak, also of wood. There are two holes in the calotte for the eyes. These dou are given free dlo by the populace which makes up their cortege. They wander about the village and fields day and night..." (Binger).

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There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the Komo-ya (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The Komo-tigi of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The Komo-ya are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

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Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko den da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the soli or bolo-ko.

794 796 539 way to this child, the way which the village follows."

One by one they pass before the wara-da who, dressed in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--Mun' b'i kun' (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head).[274]

2. Kala, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the nyama) (1).

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1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the nyama tree (Bauhinia reticulata), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

794 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept
796 in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

● [539] --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?

--M ba' la (I am).

--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

[201] This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

[778] Objects used in worship include: the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

794 The food is eaten by those attending the ceremony;
796 the millet mush which constitutes the meal is supposed to have been prepared by the wives of the dignitaries. This communion is the most important act of the ceremony.

When night comes, the procession of the Nama takes place. Its aim is to rid the village and its environs of sorcerers, the eaters of souls known as [279] suba (1), and to discover and

1 See Chapter 7 below. [Not translated.]

destroy the objects called siri which bear witness to the measures taken by the sorcerers to harm the natives.

The ritual cries of ture-dyo and dyo-Nama break into the racket of trumpets and drums while the Nama wanders about. The dye-n-fa, wearing the symbolic headdress (Nama-kongolo) and preceded by the da-ro-tigi tinkling his bell to warn people to clear the way, is followed or surrounded by torchbearers (called ta-tugula-n-tigi) who shout a hymn in praise of the god.

●[539] A dyigina so Nama fambali: He is our host, mighty Nama.
A fyerela ka den': He blossoms in order to bear fruit.
Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye: Oh! Suba (2), shame on you!"

2. Literally, the "bonds" (see Chapter 7 below). [Not translated]

One of the persons in his entourage shouts defiance and curses in all directions, aimed at the suba, the eaters of souls.

It is during this procession that the dye-n-fa, at the instigation of the bearer of the symbol, discover the siri-fen' (2) [Ed., see footnote 2 above]; these are the objects used by the eaters of souls to accomplish their sinister designs or are the remains of their macabre repasts. Here it is a knife, there a pot, elsewhere a bit of human flesh (or so it is claimed)! All these things are dug up amidst cries, exclamations, and imprecations by the whole company.

A suba discovered in the course of these proceedings is hotly pursued, and it is said that, exhausted by the chase and

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: If you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

-- Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

-- O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
[198] old men. They are told the significance of the words with double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of which the following are some examples:

-- E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

-- Ne b'a la (I am).

-- Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, kaf (You are indeed one of us)!

538 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant
814 parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan de-
631 veloped from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate
● [539] banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.")

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

171 614 823 784 in his Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala /The Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of Mythes, cultes et religions. His tné is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

773 614 539 784 825 Every tne has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.

Legend of the Two Kouloubali

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The Kouloubali lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A mpolio was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the Kouloubali and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good mpolio, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young Kouloubali was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.
784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

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A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?" she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh! I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood, gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

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These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

789 after death. This energy, this fluid, is the envoy, messenger, or
778 emissary of hatred, vengeance, and justice, and it goes wherever it is sent by the will which is its director and master; it goes wrongly or rightly to bring misfortune, poverty, sickness, and death. The word gnâma is constantly heard from Bambara lips.

789 The song of young girls who have been excised begins with
778 these words:

304 Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
539 Go away from me, gnâma, oh, gnâma, go away from me!
Dankoun bâ la
(i.e., Gnâma who dwell) at the great corner of land formed by two paths that cross.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnama who kill, go away from me! (1)

1. Translation: "Go away from me, all kinds of gnâma, who dwell at the big dankoun (a corner of land formed by two paths that fork, intersect, or cross at the exit from the village)! Gnâma who kill, go away from me!"

789 The ears of those who consult sorcerers have had their fill of
778 this word: Gnâma djougou bi é nofé. A malicious gnâma is chasing you, so avoid this and that, kill a goat, a chicken, or a dog, place a gift of cowrie shells, a kola nut, etc... in a certain place. Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la, otherwise the gnâma, the avenging force possessed by your father, will rise up against you.

Always, the word gnâma carries this meaning of a force, a power, a fluid that causes sickness, suffering, and death. The following proverb alone expresses much of its meaning: Ni warani-n-kala ko, /28/ ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. If the panther (a tyrant as wicked as a panther) says, "Let us kill him," we surely have no gnâma to set against him (no force or energy that we might set against him as a counterbalance to the force of his gnâma).

176 inanimate object, and whether the form it takes is human or animal, whether it resembles an eggplant, a potato, or a napkin ring, that form remains a boli as long /128/ as there is a piece left that is visible to the naked eye, and the boli never leaves it. In the case of the boli, there is such a close union between the object and the spirit that this combination becomes one and the same individual; it is the union of soul and body in order to make up a person or individual.

176 182 In sacrifices to the gnéna, the reverence of the Negro is not directed to the spring, the tree, the plant, etc., but to the genie that inhabits it. But in sacrifices to the gnâ, reverence is directed simultaneously to the spirit and to its object; one does not exist, is not thought of, without the other. Negroes have often given me to understand this, and one of my old friends, in order to explain his worship, expressed himself in these words: "When you honor your friend, is it his body or his soul that you honor? It is neither his body nor his soul; you honor both at the same time, the person himself as a whole, your friend; that is how it is with the boli." (1) /129/

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1. In Bambara:	Translation:
"Ne koko, n'i bé i terké bôgna, i be a fari bôgna wa ouala a dousou bôgna. I té i terké bôgna wa? A bé té boliou fé koï'. An bi Sétané bôgna wa ouala a fen yéré bôgna, héwa, anou dé bi boli bôgna.	"I myself say: if you honor your friend, do you honor his body or his soul? You honor your friend, don't you? It is the same with the boli. Do we honor satan or do we honor his object? Assuredly, it is the boli.
"Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri an'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bôgna doron? Djiri te fen gouansan yé? a ti fouï gnâ.	"There is a difference between the dasiri tree and its genie. If you sacrifice to the tree, you sacrifice to the dasiri, but do you not honor the dasiri alone? Is the tree not a mere object? It gives us nothing.
"Taï, o do.	"Exactly, that's right.

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"O fara n fasili-ln te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son-tigné, nka i be sétané bôgna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te foufi gnâ.

"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té ké boli yé wa?"

"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.

"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Goïn, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

778 A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
539 He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest tjon k'a é.

A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has blossomed, he has his fruit.

Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.

Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we have a means of saving ourselves.

778 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only
782 members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

778 1. The Nama of the Malinké is
171 absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

881 796 794 the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

1. Kala, "handle of a tool, " "a pestle, " "an oblong object"; Komo kala, iron tube ending in two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, 881 796 794 and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

●539 Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him) (3).

3. Songs of Nama:
A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a'é.
The Nama that kills has paid us a visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

[266] *The Nama protects against the souba, initiates of siri, reputed to be cannibals.

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neglectful toward him (let us welcome
the Nama who comes to visit us).
A fiérela ka den, boli fiérela ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nin kéra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kéra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of pro-
tecting ourselves from it. /189/

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While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foroko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth

1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear